





## Negroes in the Civil War

THE CIVIL WAR was caused by the different needs of the North and the South. Laws that were good for agriculture in the South were bad for industry in the North. And laws that helped industry hurt agriculture.

The South felt that the North was picking on it. The North thought the South was being old fashioned and holding up progress. This went on until finally the two started fighting. But only a few people in the South owned most of the best land and most of the slaves. And only a few people owned the industry in the North. These people didn't even have to fight in the war.

In the South, anyone who owned more than 15 slaves did not have to be a soldier. In the North, anyone who paid the government \$300 did not have to go to war. That was a lot of money in those days and only the rich could afford it. As in most wars, it was the working people on both sides who did the fighting. People said it was a "rich man's war but a poor man's fight".

The North said it was fighting to save the Union, not to free the slaves. President Lincoln said that he would keep slavery if it would hold

*How are Negroes treated  
in the Army today?*

UNCLE SAM  
WANTS  
YOU!



WHITE  
ONLY

the country together. At first, many Union officers actually returned runaway slaves to their masters. This helped the very people they were fighting. So in the beginning of the war, many slaves were confused about what the war meant for them. They waited and watched to see what would happen.

Finally the Northern army decided to stop helping the enemy by returning slaves. Negroes flocked to the Union lines by the thousands. Over 500,000 slaves ran away from their masters to follow the Union army. It was the biggest general strike in the nation's history.

After two years of fighting, Lincoln decided that he could not win the war without the help of Negroes. He gave the order that Negroes could join the army. By the end of the war, almost 200,000 black men had answered the call to arms. And 38,000 of them died in battle.

WHEN NEGROES FIRST joined the army, many Union officers didn't think they would make good soldiers. But they soon proved that they could fight. In fact, they fought even harder than white soldiers. They knew the evil of the enemy's slavery better than anyone else. One Union colonel said that black soldiers won battles that the bravest white troops would have lost.

In one battle near Richmond, 12 Negroes won Congressional Medals of Honor. In another battle at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, 2,000 Texans attacked 1,000 Negroes. The Negro troops ran out of bullets and fought the Confederates with their bayonets and with their hands. They used their empty guns as clubs. The Texans were not used to this kind of battle and ran off in defeat.

Another reason Negroes fought so hard was because they knew they would suffer hard treatment if they were captured. Many Confed-

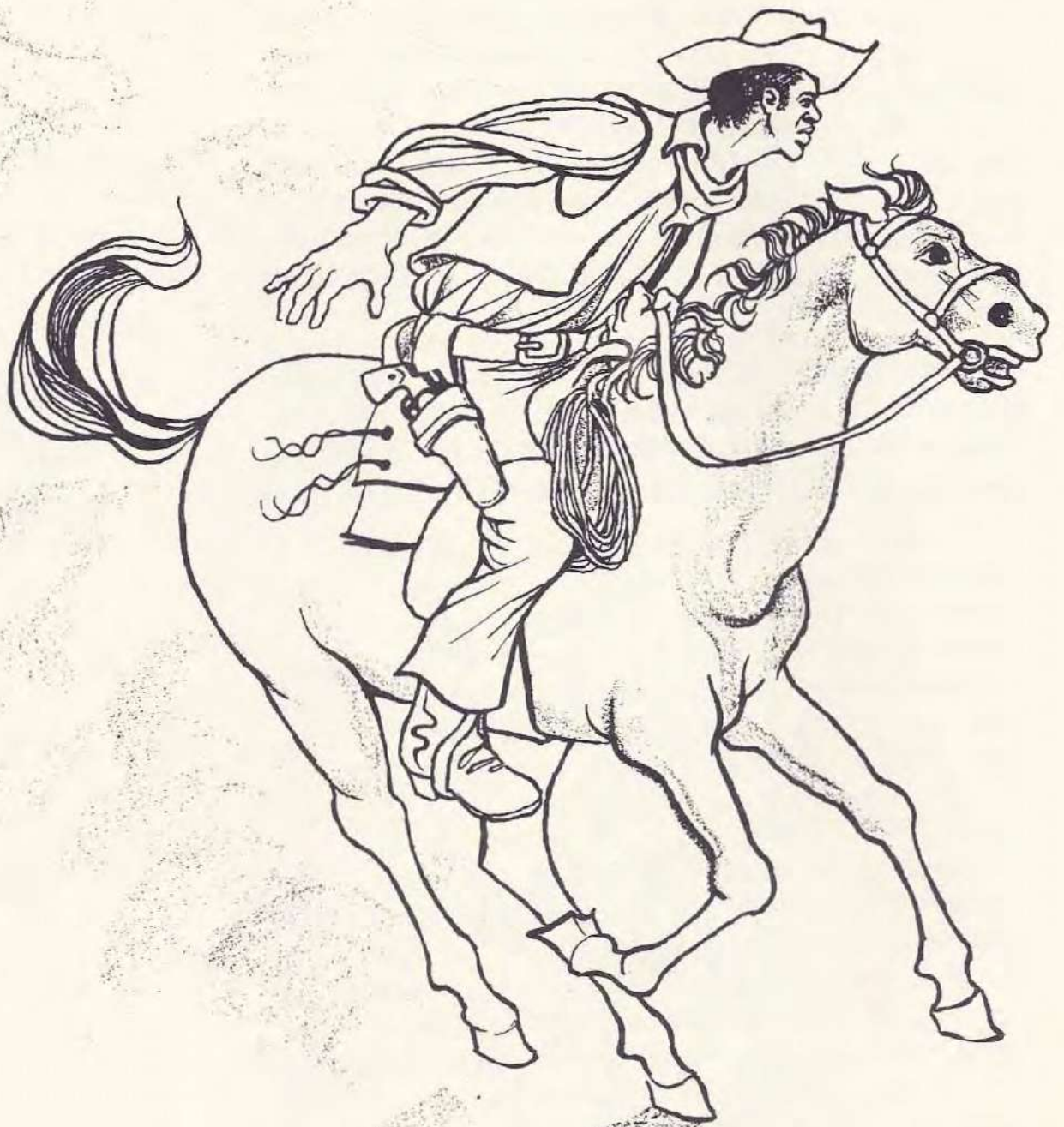
erates hated Negroes. Instead of treating them as prisoners of war, they would murder any Negroes they caught.

One of the worst crimes of the war was the Fort Pillow Massacre. The Confederates captured the fort and killed every Negro after the battle. They killed them with bayonets and with clubs. They burned them alive and buried them alive. They nailed them to houses and tortured them to death. Three hundred Negroes were murdered this way. The Confederate general who led the murderers was Nathan Bedford Forrest. Forrest was a slave trader before the war. He became the first grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan after the war.

*How is the North like the South today? Who is in control?*

WHEN THE WAR ended in 1865, Negroes looked to the future with hope in their hearts. They didn't know that one hundred years later, equality would still be an empty promise.







## Negro Cowboys

MOST PEOPLE TODAY don't know that Negroes played an important part in taming the American West. But they did. As early as 1539, a Negro explorer named Estevánico discovered the Pueblos of New Mexico. In the middle of the 1700's, Negro families were among the founders of Los Angeles. Before the Civil War, many Negroes were brought to Texas as slaves. After the war, many more went west to find a new life.

The big business of the West was raising cattle. The big problem of the West was to get the cattle to the people in the east who would buy them. That meant very hard work driving the big herds on the trails from Texas to the railroads in the north. The trip took two or three months. Over 5,000 Negro cowboys helped to do that work.

Besides being cowboys, many Negroes were cooks for the trail crews. The cook was often a cowboy who was too old for the hard work of riding with the herds. He was in charge of setting up camp and feeding the cowboys. He also kept up their spirits by listening to their troubles and entertaining them. Sometimes he played a banjo or a fiddle.

*Do people always get along better when they're not competing for jobs? Why?*

When the first jail was built in Abilene, a Negro cook was the first prisoner. He was also the first to escape when the cowboys he cooked for found out where he was. They chased the marshall away and shot the lock off the jail. The cowboys always tried hard to keep their cooks happy.

Negro cowboys met with some discrimination. But there was less than in other parts of the country. In the east, poor white workers were afraid that Negroes would get their jobs so they hated Negroes. In the West, there were more jobs than workers. If men could work hard, that was more important than their race. Even so, very few Negroes ever got the top jobs.

There was more justice for Negroes in the West than in the South. If a white man murdered a Negro, he might hang for it if he were caught. And a Negro's testimony in court could put a white man at the end of a rope. But many of the whites who went west were unreconstructed confederates. So there were examples of people being murdered for no reason other than the color of their skin, just like in the South.

Thousands of Negroes also served in the cavalry. There were two regiments of Negro cavalry, the 9th and the 10th. They saw duty all over the West, from the border of Mexico clear up to Canada. The Indians called them "Buffalo Soldiers" because their tight curly hair looked like buffalo hair. They fought in many battles with the Indians. Negro cavalry captured Geronimo.

Sometimes Negro soldiers even fought against Negro Indians. One Negro who was on both sides was James Beckwith. He was a trapper, frontiersman, army scout and Indian fighter. He was also a member of several Indian tribes. When he died he was a chief of the Crows.

BESIDES WORKING AS cowboys or being



in the cavalry, Negroes were also farmers, trappers, prospectors and miners. A few owned saloons, hotels, dance halls and gambling houses. And some were outlaws.

One outlaw was Ben Hodges of Dodge City. He was a swindler, forger and cattle thief. Nobody trusted him but most people liked him. They thought his plans were funny. It was hard to find a jury that would convict him of anything. He lived a long life. When he died, he was buried near the founding fathers of Dodge City so that "they could keep an eye on him".

Another Negro outlaw who was not so well liked was Cherokee Bill. He was a robber and a killer. By the time he was 20 years old, he had killed so many people that the judge who sentenced him to hang said he was a monster. They asked him if he had any last words as he stood on the gallows. He said, "No. I came here to die—not to make a speech."

There were many Negro outlaws and there were many Negroes who rode with the posses that tried to catch them. Negroes rode with Billy the Kid and Negro cavalry rode after them. Negroes had a part in just about everything that happened in the west. Many were famous for bronco busting and for bulldogging.

Rodeo workers today say that Bill Pickett, a Negro, invented bulldogging. Pickett worked on the same ranch with Tom Mix and Will Rogers. In the early 1900's, they went around the country putting on shows. Pickett's bulldogging act was always one of the highlights of the show.

Today in books, movies and television, the old West is lily white. Why don't they show some of the Negroes who worked and fought to win the West? Even in his place in history, the Negro finds himself the first to be fired.

*Was being a cook for cowboys like being a cook today? How was it different?*









## Reconstruction

WHEN THE CIVIL War ended, people in the North couldn't decide what to do with the South. Before the war, almost all of the best land and most of the slaves were owned by a small number of white people. These slaveowners made most of the decisions about how the South was run. They were also the people who started the war. Many northerners wanted to pardon the slaveowners and let them run the South again. President Lincoln felt that way. When Lincoln was shot, his Vice President, Andrew Johnson, became President. He wanted to forgive the Confederates too.

For the first two years after the war ended, Johnson allowed the white southerners to run the South. The Confederates set out to make the South just the way it had been before the war. They did not own the Negroes any more, but they passed many laws, called Black Codes, which made the Negroes almost like slaves again. These laws said that Negroes had to have jobs. If a Negro left his job, he could be arrested.

During those years, black people tried to find ways to get the freedom they had been promised. In **some** places they organized into

ment have mass meetings at local levels?



Democratic Party to fight for their rights. In 1865, in Florida, one of the Freedom Parties even held a Freedom Vote like the people of Mississippi did in 1963 and 1964. Negroes were no longer slaves, but they were not citizens either. They did not become citizens until the 14th Amendment to the Constitution was passed. They did not get the right to vote until the 15th Amendment was passed in 1865.

There were many people in the North who didn't like the way the President was letting the white southerners take over again. They wanted to "reconstruct" society in the South so that equality and democracy would replace rule by a few. They were called "radicals". Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner were two radical Republicans who led the Reconstruction program in Congress.

**THE FREED SLAVES** wanted to change things in the South too. They wanted to own their own land. They wanted education. They wanted a voice in how things were run.

During the war, many slaves took over the plantations when the Union army chased the owners away. The soldiers told the slaves that Congress would give them the land to keep after the war. The slaves set up their own governments. They built roads and schools and churches. And they got guns to protect themselves. Sometimes when the Confederates came back to their plantations after the war the people who had been their slaves kept them away with guns.

When the radical Republicans took over the Reconstruction program in Congress, things began to look much better for black people in the South. All over the South Negroes and also poor whites organized together into what they called Union Leagues. Union Leagues were very much like the Freedom Democratic Party is today. They

held mass meetings once a week in churches and schools. They talked about the kind of government they wanted in the South.

During Reconstruction, Negroes held many government offices. There were two black Senators in Washington, D.C.: Hiram R. Revels and Blanche K. Bruce. They were both elected from Mississippi. There were also 14 black Congressmen in the House of Representatives. One of these men was Robert Smalls from South Carolina. He was a hero in the Civil War. He stole a Confederate gun boat and sailed it out of a southern harbor right under the noses of the Confederate guards. He turned over the ship to the Union army. Later he was made a Union officer.

There were also many Negroes in state and local governments. There were black police, judges, lawyers and sheriffs in the South.

Before the war, only rich people could afford to get an education. Only people who owned land could vote. Poor white people were not much better off than Negroes. The poor whites and Negroes who were elected during Reconstruction passed laws that said you didn't have to own land to vote. They passed laws so that everyone could get an education. They gave more rights to women and passed civil rights bills.

Most history books in the South don't say that Negroes and poor whites passed good laws during Reconstruction. They say the Negroes did not have enough education to pass good laws. Actually, many of the Negroes who were elected were well educated. Besides, you don't have to have an education to know what people need. When someone is sick, you don't have to go to school to know that he needs medical care. And when someone can't read, anyone knows he needs education. Actually the Reconstruction legislatures passed many very good laws. While they

*Should Negroes run for office even if they don't think they'll get elected? Is everyone "qualified" to run?*



*What would it be like if  
Negroes were sheriffs today?*



were in power there was more democracy in the South than there ever has been since. The Reconstruction legislatures passed laws that were good for everybody, not just a few of the people.

HISTORY BOOKS ALSO talk about how the white people were afraid that the blacks would “take over”. But the black people never had enough power to “take over” even if they had wanted to. There were always many white people in power too. The Negroes in the South depended on help from Congress and the North. For a while, when free Negroes made up a majority of the voters in the South, the Negroes got the support they needed. But the government began to pardon more and more of the old Confederates. The Democratic Party began to come back into power in the South.

All along, the white southerners did everything they could think of to keep Negroes from getting power. Most of all they tried to keep Negroes from voting. They organized secret groups like the Ku Klux Klan. They tried to get their old power back by burning, beating and killing. They also began to pass new laws which took away voting rights from Negroes. But there were still federal troops in the South. And the Union Leagues still had guns to defend themselves. So at first the white southerners didn’t get too far.

But in 1876, the election for President was very close. There were three Southern states that turned in two sets of votes. The slaveowners had separate elections and they voted for the Democrat, Tilden. Negroes and poor whites voted for Hayes, the Republican. Congress set up a committee to decide which set of votes should be counted.

Hayes wanted to make sure he became President. He talked to the people on the committee who were in favor of the **slaveowners**. He

said that if they counted his votes instead of Tilden's, he would pull the federal troops out of the South. That meant that Negroes and poor whites would no longer have federal protection. So, in 1877, President Hayes sold out the cause of democracy. Klan violence increased as soon as the federal troops were gone.

After Hayes was elected, many Negroes and poor whites in the South felt that the Republican Party didn't really care about them anymore. They also knew that the Democratic Party was run by old Confederates. They were confused about which party to vote for.

THEN, IN THE 1890's, a third party was organized to oppose the other two.

It was called the Populist, or Peoples Party. The Populists said that poor whites and Negroes should stick together. As long as they were set against each other, their wages would be low and they would never get anywhere. One Populist leader, Tom Watson, said the party would "wipe out the color line."

The Democrats were afraid the Populists would take over the South. They tried to split the union of poor whites and Negroes. They blamed Negroes for all the troubles of the South and they preached hatred of Negroes. The Democratic Party, with help from the Klan, started race riots and lynchings. Many of the poor whites in the Populist Party began to turn against Negroes.

The next step was to take the right to vote away from more Negroes. Each of the southern states passed laws to keep Negroes from voting. Mississippi was the first in 1890. By 1910, all the states in the South had such laws. These laws had to be tricky. The 15th Amendment said it was illegal to take away the Negro's right to vote. One

*Do black people and white people work together today? How?*



*What is the difference between Democrats and Republicans? Who do they represent? How are they the same?*



kind of tricky law was called a "grandfather clause." It said that anyone who was a voter in 1867, or the descendant of someone who was a voter then, did not have to take a literacy test. Since almost no Negroes could vote in 1867, the law meant that all Negroes had to take a literacy test while most white people didn't. This way the states could use a very hard literacy test and fail all the Negroes.

By losing the Negro vote, the Populist Party was cut in half. More and more they tried to get white votes by talking against Negroes. By 1906, even Tom Watson turned against Negroes. By then the Democrats were all the way back in power. The Populist Party slowly died out. Negroes and poor whites were left without any voice in the decisions that affected their lives.

AFTER THE DEMOCRATS finished taking away the right to vote from Negroes, they started taking away many other rights too. The system of segregation laws which we call Jim Crow began to grow all over the South. By 1900, all the southern states had Jim Crow laws for trains. A few had segregation on street cars too. After 1900, the South started to segregate everything it could think of.

In the next 20 years, almost every point of contact between the races was covered by a Jim Crow law. If laws missed something, custom soon segregated that thing anyway. Segregation became so much the way of life in the South that most people believed it must have always been that way.









## W. E. B. Du Bois

IN 1868, TWO things happened which were very important for the Negro people of America. One was the signing of the 15th amendment which gave Negroes the right to vote. The other was the birth of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois.

Du Bois grew up in Massachusetts. He went to Fisk University. In the summers he traveled around in the back country and taught at log cabin Negro schools. He went to Harvard University. Later he received the first Ph.D. Harvard had ever awarded to a Negro. For 13 years he taught at Atlanta University. During this time he published many studies on Negro life. He became an expert on the American Negro.

AT THIS TIME, the most powerful Negro in America was Booker T. Washington. Washington was the founder of Tuskegee Institute, the famous Negro trade school in Alabama. He was also the unofficial leader of the Negro race in the United States. Washington had reached his important position because he said things which white people liked to hear.

One of his most famous speeches was called

grading way in which many Negroes were treated. They demanded full rights for Negroes at once.

A new Group grew out of the Niagara Movement in 1909. This was the NAACP. For those days the NAACP was a very militant group. It protested against many forms of discrimination. Its main way of fighting was with court cases. Du Bois was the only Negro among the NAACP's first officers. He was the editor of the NAACP magazine, the **Crisis**. Du Bois edited the **Crisis** for many years. He used it as a voice for Negro desires.

In 1919, at the end of World War I, Du Bois organized a Pan African Congress which met in France. This was a meeting where Negroes from all over the world could get together and talk. Du Bois felt that both blacks and whites in America made the mistake of thinking of Negroes as only a minority with white people the majority. In the world, white people are a minority and colored people are the majority.

At that Congress, Du Bois learned about discrimination against American Negro soldiers in World War I. The United States army had asked the French not to be friendly with Negro soldiers. The army had said that, in the United States, Negroes were considered "a menace". Du Bois printed this information in the **Crisis**. The government was very upset. The Post Office would not mail the **Crisis** for a few days. But finally it was mailed. Negroes got to hear how their soldiers were treated.

Du Bois was an intellectual himself and he believed that many more Negroes would have to become educated before equality would be attained. As he grew older, he became more and more bitter about the possibility of Negroes ever attaining equal rights in this country. He moved more and more to the left in his political beliefs. He began to spend most of his time working for Pan

*What do you think freedom and equality mean? How do people get freedom and equality?*



*What does it mean when people go to jail for things they think are right? Is it good or bad?*



African unity, socialism and world peace. He believed they had to come first before real freedom and equality would be possible for black people.

To Du Bois, freedom and equality meant more than being able to vote or to buy a house or to get a job. It meant that everyone should have enough food and clothes and a warm house, even if he couldn't get a job. It meant men shouldn't have to work long hours for little pay when someone else got all the money from their work. It meant the United States government shouldn't oppress people in the rest of the world.

Du Bois opposed the Korean War and said that Negroes should not fight against other people of color. The United States government put him in jail for his peace work just as today it puts in jail some people who oppose the war in Vietnam. Du Bois won his case and went free. But after he had been in jail some people no longer respected him or listened to him.

Du Bois was then an old man. He decided to leave the United States and travel over the world. He also joined the Communist Party. Finally he settled in Ghana, Africa, where the black people welcomed him. But Du Bois did not forget his people in America. In 1961, when he was 93, he wanted to join the Freedom Riders in the South. His friends thought he was too old to go but they had a hard time stopping him.

DU BOIS WAS AN important leader for black people in America and all over the world. His wisdom and courage helped Negroes all during the years from Reconstruction to the modern movement. In 1963, on the night before the March on Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois died.

*If world government were decided by a one man-one vote, would most of the delegates be white or colored?*





## The Modern Movement

BY THE BEGINNING of the 20th Century, the Negroes in America were in many ways as badly off as they had been under slavery. Legally Negroes were free, but in fact they labored under economic and political and social slavery little different from the past. Negroes who left the South found themselves crowded into northern ghettos, unable to get work.

Even the trade union movement, which was organizing workers to try for better working conditions and higher wages, usually did not let Negroes join. White businessmen used the old southern trick of playing Negroes and poor white workers against each other. When a union threatened to strike for higher wages, the boss would threaten to fire all the strikers and hire Negroes instead. A lot of Negroes needed work so badly that they were willing to work for very low wages. That way businessmen tricked Negroes and poor whites into fighting each other instead of joining together to work for higher wages. Because of this, when a company did recognize a union, that only meant that Negroes had a harder time getting jobs.

Negroes did not give up fighting and hop-

*What is a cop? What does he do? What do you think he should do?*



ing, but very little was gained during those years. In the South, more and more black landowners lost their land. They had to become sharecroppers or leave the South. In the North, a system of defacto segregation grew as more and more Negroes migrated to the cities and were confined in ghettos. Lynching continued in the South, and race riots happened more and more often in the North. Throughout the 20th century, as he has always done, the Negro kept on protesting his inhuman condition.

THEN CAME 1960. Almost 100 years after the Civil War, four Negro students sat down at a Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. They were courteous and well behaved. They asked only what was theirs by right—that they be allowed to eat like anyone else. Their tactic was an old one, and yet it was revolutionary. It was simply refusing to accept injustice. The tactic had been used before. There had been sit-ins and freedom rides before. But somehow 1960 was different. The movement spread at once. All over the South other students also held sit-ins. Within days, thousands of young people were sitting-in and being attacked and arrested.

Two months later, in April, 1960, some of the sit-in students organized the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee with the help of SNCC advisor Ella Baker. SNCC set up communications between the many different groups that were demonstrating.

In 1961 came the freedom rides to protest discrimination in interstate travel. There had been Supreme Court decisions outlawing such segregation before. But it was not until the freedom rides that Jim Crow was finally kicked out of the bus stations. People came from all across the country



to try to integrate bus stations nonviolently. In Alabama and Mississippi buses were attacked and burned. Many freedom riders were beaten and arrested. Since then the Movement has gone on and grown, aided by such people as Harry Belafonte and many unsung Negroes.

WHAT IS THE Movement? On the outside, it is civil rights organizations like CORE, SNCC, SCLC and the NAACP. It is places like Albany, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; McComb, Mississippi; and Lowndes County, Alabama. It is people like Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers, and Fannie Lou Hamer. To people across the country, reading newspapers and watching on television, the Movement is the horror of bombed churches and senseless murders. It is the excitement of a March on Washington or a Selma to Montgomery March.

On the inside, the Movement is day-to-day hard work. It is walking and knocking on doors and talking to people. It is people getting together in mass meetings. It is fear and learning how to overcome fear. And maybe most of all, the Movement is people learning to ask questions.

Mississippi is a good example. In many ways Mississippi is one of the worst states in the country. The Movement decided to concentrate on Mississippi. CORE, SNCC, SCLC and the NAACP have all worked in Mississippi and still work there.

In the fall of 1961, some people began to question whether public accommodations testing was enough to do in the fight for equal rights. They saw that most Negroes were too poor to eat in the white man's restaurant, even when they had the right to. Some people decided that what Negroes needed more than public accommodations was the right to vote. If Negroes could vote, then they could have some voice in making decisions

*Do poor white people have "freedom"? If not, how do you think they should try and get it?*



*If you were a civil rights worker, what would you do to help people overcome their fear?*



about their lives. So a voter registration project was started in southwest Mississippi.

Voter registration workers found it was very hard to get Negroes registered. They found that most white people didn't want Negroes registered now any more than they had wanted them registered back in Reconstruction. The white people were still using the same methods to keep Negroes from voting. The registration test was hard. There were no rules to say who passed and who failed the test. The Registrar just decided. If you were black, you probably wouldn't pass, even if you answered all the questions right. If you did pass, your name was published in the paper. You might lose your job or be shot at. Even if you did get registered, you couldn't help decide who would be candidates. Often you weren't allowed to vote. People began to question whether just trying to get Negroes registered was enough.

Then someone had a new idea—freedom registration. Freedom registration forms asked only a few simple questions about how old you were and where you lived. You didn't have to take a test. Anyone who wanted to register could.

In 1963, a freedom vote was held in Mississippi. Negroes who had not been able to register but who wanted to vote could vote in the freedom vote. It was not an official election. But it showed that 80,000 Negroes in Mississippi knew how to vote and who they wanted to vote for. People asked more questions about what it meant if so many people in Mississippi wanted to vote and were not allowed to vote. Some people decided that it meant that the regular Mississippi Democratic Party candidates were not legally elected since they did not represent the majority of the people in the state.

People decided to set up a new democratic party called the Freedom Democratic Party. This

new party would challenge the legality of the regular Democratic Party.

During the summer of 1964, civil rights workers all over Mississippi talked to people and freedom registered people and helped to set up the FDP. The FDP sent democratically elected representatives to Atlantic City to challenge the representatives of the regular Democratic Party at the Party convention. But the national Democratic Party refused to seat the FDP representatives. That made a lot of people ask more questions about democracy and our national government.

The FDP had a freedom vote and elected Mrs. Hamer, Mrs. Devine and Mrs. Gray to represent them in Congress instead of the regular Democratic candidates. Then they went to Washington, D.C. to challenge the seating of the regular Democratic candidates because they were elected illegally. During the Challenge, there was lots of testimony gathered about how black people in Mississippi were not allowed to register or vote. The testimony proved that the Mississippi Congressmen were not legally elected. But the House of Representatives voted to seat the regular Representatives anyway. It voted to deny democracy in Mississippi.

Now people in Mississippi are asking questions again. What does it mean when Congress accepts members who are not elected legally? What kind of Congress is it? What kind of voice in the government do people really have? How can people get their fair share of representation in this government which is supposed to be theirs?

**SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE** that one of the best ways to get equal rights is to make the nation aware of all the ways Negroes are discriminated against. These people say that when the country becomes aware of the injustices, it will act to cor-

*What do you think Negroes should do to make the Democratic and Republican parties do more about their needs?*



*What laws do you know about that you think are unjust? Do you think you should disobey these laws?*



rect the injustices with new laws, such as the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. Martin Luther King, Jr. is the most famous spokesman for this point of view.

Dr. King first became well known during the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955. In Montgomery, the Negro people chose to stop riding city buses rather than ride at the back of the bus. They held a boycott which lasted over a year. They formed car pools to take each other to work. When an injunction was passed banning car pools, the black people of Montgomery walked to work. Finally they won their right to sit where they chose.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was formed as a result of the boycott and Dr. King became its President. Dr. King has since led demonstrations in many different places both in the South and the North. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, and he has become famous all over the world for his work in the freedom movement. Dr. King was the leader of the Selma to Montgomery march in the spring of 1965.

Dr. King believes that Negroes should continue to use nonviolent means of protest, but he admits that it is hard to be nonviolent. He has often said that Negroes in America cannot be expected to stay nonviolent if the country does not respond to Negro demands for justice. Dr. King says that there are just laws and unjust laws. He says people have a moral responsibility to obey just laws. But they also have a moral responsibility **not** to obey unjust laws. A just law, Dr. King says, is one which "uplifts human personality. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust . . . All segregation statutes are unjust . . ."

Dr. King also says that any law is unjust which affects a minority which had no voice in making the law but which does not affect the majority which made the law. "In disobeying such unjust laws," says Dr. King, "we do so peacefully,

openly and nonviolently. Most importantly, we willingly accept the penalty, whatever it is. But in this way the public comes to reexamine the law in question.”

Many people feel that Dr. King’s approach is the right one. But other people question whether new laws will ever bring the Negroes real freedom. In 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States made a ruling that separate schools were not equal and that schools in the South were to integrate with all reasonable speed. In the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title VI says that federal funds will be cut off from any school which is not integrated unless it turns in a plan for integration which is accepted. In spite of these federal laws which were passed to correct the injustice of segregated schools, before 1964 only 1.2% of the Negro school children in the 11 states of the old confederacy attended integrated schools. Since 1964 the number is still less than 10%.

Dr. King believes with many that this approach has been slow but he sees this as being the best way the Movement can go forward. Some disagreed with this way. Among them was Malcolm X, the militant black leader who was shot to death early in 1965. Malcolm said, “The political philosophy of Black Nationalism means: we must control the politics and the politicians of our community. They must no longer take orders from outside forces. We will organize, and sweep out of office all Negro politicians who are puppets for the outside forces.” This is the kind of thing that many black people in the South are beginning to say now. They are beginning to think that black people should control the politics in communities where black people are a majority.

Malcolm did not think new laws would better things for Negroes. What was needed, he said, was that the laws we already have be fully enforced. He talked about some of the reasons why

*Does the U. S. Government do a good job of enforcing the civil rights laws it passes?*



*How was Malcolm's position different from Dr. King's? Can the two positions help each other?*



laws are not enforced. He said, "The Constitution itself has within it the machinery to expel any Representative from a state where the voting rights of the people are violated. You don't even need new legislation . . . If the black man in these southern states had his full voting right, the key Dixiecrats in Washington, D. C. . . . would lose their seats. The Democratic Party itself would lose its power . . . When you see the amount of power that would be lost by the Democratic Party if it were to lose the Dixiecrat wing . . . you can see where it's against the interests of the Democrats to give voting rights to Negroes in states where the Democrats have been in complete power and authority ever since the Civil War."

Malcolm also believed that Negroes should defend themselves. He said he would be non-violent only if other people were nonviolent with him. He said that since segregation was illegal, anyone who tried to enforce segregation was a criminal and should be treated as a criminal, even if he was a chief of police or a sheriff. He said, "In areas where our people are the constant victims of brutality, and the government seems unable or unwilling to protect them, we should form rifle clubs that can be used to defend our lives and our property in times of emergency . . . the time has come for the American Negro to fight back in self-defense whenever and wherever he is being unjustly and unlawfully attacked."

Not all black people agree with Malcolm X and not all black people agree with Dr. King. Many people have different ideas of how you get freedom and equality. But many black people are beginning to feel that they must find ways of controlling and bettering their lives if they are ever to attain real freedom and equality. New questions are being asked about control. Where does it come

from? Who really controls a community? How can people who live there get control of their own community?

IN MISSISSIPPI, PEOPLE are searching for new ways to gain control over their lives. One idea is the Freedom Labor Union. The FLU started when the workers on one plantation went on strike for higher wages and better conditions. They were thrown out of their houses and are living in tents. They are trying to develop new ways of making a living. New branches of the FLU are being formed in other parts of Mississippi.

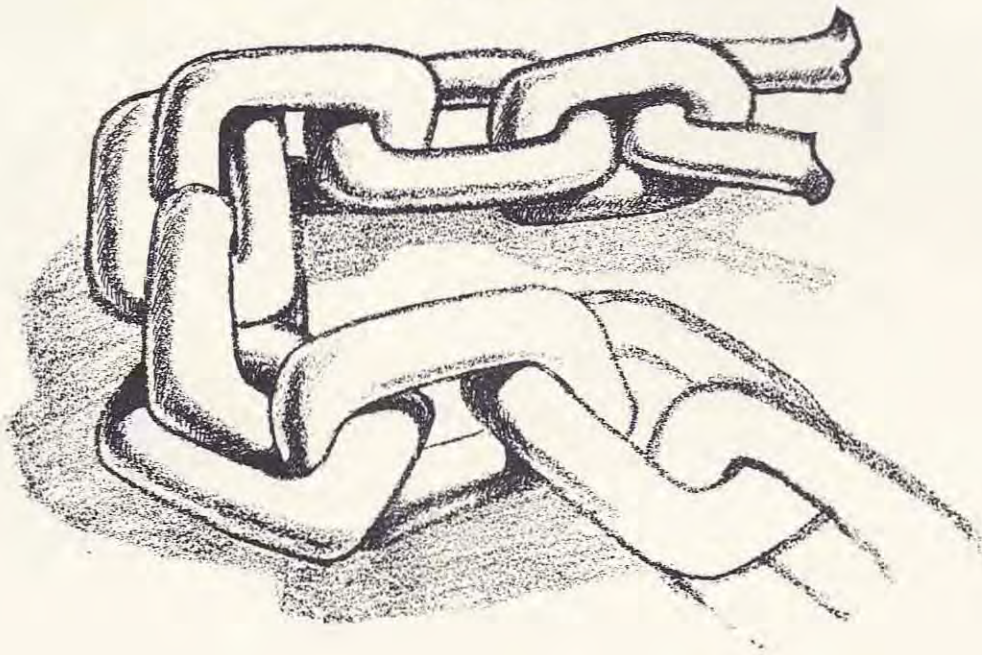
In Mississippi there is also a Poor People's Corporation. This is an organization where poor people can get money to start their own cooperative businesses. This way people can own their own companies instead of being hired to work for someone else.

In Alabama, black people are setting up a separate political party which will represent their interests. Some people call this a "third" party. They mean it is number 3 next to the Democratic and Republican parties. But for Negroes in the Alabama Black Belt, it is the "first" party.

Where is the Movement going? That depends on the people in it, the questions they ask, the decisions they make.

*Do you think the idea of the Freedom Labor Union can be used in other parts of the country?*







When did the Movement start? Was it in 1775 when the first abolitionist society was formed? Or in 1663 when the first slave revolt was planned? Maybe it was in 1526 when the first slaves ran away and joined the Indians. Then again, you might say that it began thousands of years ago when, even then, human beings were oppressed by their fellow men and they found that there is something in the human spirit which can't stand chains . . . .



A Note to Anyone Who Wants  
to Know More About Negro History

When we wrote this book, we were in Mississippi. We didn't have a big library. All we had was a freedom school library. We can tell you about some of the books we liked and learned from. But there are many other books about Negroes which we don't know about.

The book we liked best was *Before the Mayflower* by Lerone Bennett. This book is written in a way that is easy to read. It tells the story of Negro history. It starts back in Africa before any Negroes were brought to America. It carries the story all the way up to the civil rights movement today.

Another book that is easy to read is a pamphlet by the New York City Board of Education. It is called "The Negro in American History."

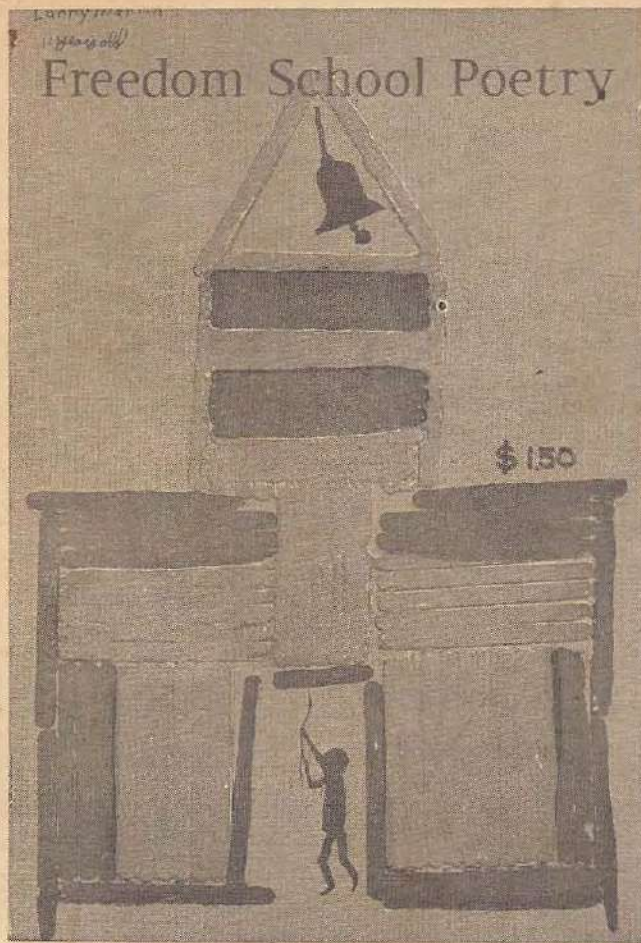
Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps have both written children's books about famous Negroes which students might like to read. Shirley Graham's biography of Frederick Douglass is another good children's book.

For freedom schools or classrooms, one of the best books we found is *A Pictorial History of The Negro in America*, edited by Langston Hughes. Also, *Ebony* magazine has run many stories on Negro history and famous Negroes which might be very good to use in classes.

For people who want more background, we got a lot of information from the following books: *Black Reconstruction in America* by W. E. B. Du Bois, Herbert Aptheker's series of pamphlets on Negroes in American history, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* by C. Van Woodward, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* by Douglass, *Negro Cowboys* by Durham and Jones, and the *Freedomways* memorial issue on Du Bois.

While not specifically about Negro history, two books which talk about American history in terms of people living and working are *We The People* by Leo Huberman and *Labor's Untold Story* by Boyer and Morais.

—f.c. & b.c.



FREEDOM SCHOOL POETRY BOOKS, a product of the life and struggle of Mississippi Black students participating in the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964, can be obtained by sending a donation of \$1.50 to SNCC, 360 Nelson St., S. W., Atlanta 14, Georgia.

contributions:

Many copies of *NEGROES IN AMERICAN HISTORY* have been given away. Money sent to us will help others to read it. The Student Voice is located at:

360 Nelson Street, S. W.  
Atlanta 14, Georgia.